Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

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CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST FIRST NATIONS WOMEN

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CORNER BROOK, NFLD. (June 22, 2007) - Canada's New Government is helping First Nations communities address the critical need for family violence prevention programs and services on reserve through a five-year investment of almost $56 million.

The announcement was made today at the National Aboriginal Women's Summit by the Honourable Bev Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, on behalf of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Jim Prentice and Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Monte Solberg. Brenda Combs, Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, joined Minister Oda to make this announcement.

"Our government is deeply concerned about discrimination and violence against First Nations women. Today I am pleased to announce the extension of the mandate for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) until 2012," said Minister Oda.

"This new funding will help the 35 existing shelters and go towards construction of up to five shelters," Minister Oda said. "These funds are over and above the $6 million that was announced in October 2006 as a one-time allocation to the Family Violence Prevention Program to assist with immediate shelter needs."

The current Family Violence Prevention Program supports a network of 35 shelters serving approximately 265 First Nations communities. The total budget is $18.5 million per year, $11.5 million of which goes to operational funding and $7 million is used for approximately 350 community-based prevention projects.

The breakdown of the new investment includes: $53.45 million will go directly towards operational costs of existing shelters to provide protection and prevention services that meet the needs of women, children and families ordinarily resident on-reserve. A total of $2.2 million will go to support the construction of up to five new shelters through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Shelter Enhancement Program which currently provides $1 million annually for construction, acquisition, repair, rehabilitation and improvement of on-reserve shelters.

"Support for new and existing shelters delivers on a key government commitment and is a tangible example of action by Canada's New Government to support First Nations women and children," said Minister Oda.

INAC will continue to work with First Nations partners such as the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, and provincial and federal governments to enhance culturally relevant

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prevention programming, implement the funding formula for shelter operations, and work toward improved service delivery standards, human resource strategies and training plans for shelters.

"The National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV) is proud to be part of this announcement today. We worked with INAC and others to create an awareness of the need for investments that will improve the Family Violence Prevention Program," said Brenda Combs, Chair of NACAFV. "As an executive director of a shelter myself, I know the investment is one that is long over due and so essential to enabling us to assist women and their children during crises situations - when they have no where else to turn."

Along with the enhancements to INAC's Family Violence Prevention Programs, Minister Oda said, "INAC is also taking action to address the important issue of Matrimonial Real Property on reserve and repeal of Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which will ensure that First Nations women have the same rights as other women in Canada."

Backgrounder - Family Violence Prevention/Shelter Enhancement Programs

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Backgrounder - Family Violence Prevention/Shelter Enhancement Programs

The Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) is one component of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's priority for women, children and families. The program provides operational funding for a network of 35 shelters, and supports community-based prevention projects. Approximately 265 First Nations communities are served by the shelters. Each year, approximately 1,900 women and 2,300 children access those services.

The Family Violence Prevention Program and the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) are two components of the Family Violence Initiative launched in 1988 as a comprehensive approach to family violence across fifteen federal departments and agencies. These components are described in greater detail below.

Shelters

Shelters for First Nations women and children are important for their safety and well-being in family violence crisis situations.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) assists in repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for women and their children, youth and men who are victims of family violence, and in acquiring or building new shelters and second-stage housing where needed. Through SEP, CMHC currently provides capital cost funding of $1-million annually for on reserve construction and repair of shelters. First Nations or non-profit organizations are granted forgivable loans for shelter construction, acquisition, renovation or repair and must enter into loan agreements with CMHC to ensure that the work is carried out appropriately.

INAC provides operational funding to a network of 35 shelters used by First Nations women who ordinarily live on-reserve. The construction of these shelters are CMHC SEP funded or funded through other earlier CMHC Programs. The Family Violence Prevention Program currently provides approximately $11.5 million in annual operational funding to support a network of 35 existing shelters, serving approximately 265 First Nation communities.

Prevention Projects

The anticipated result of the Family Violence Prevention Program is a reduction in family violence and a more secure family environment for children on-reserve, by providing family violence prevention and protection services.

The Family Violence Prevention Program currently provides approximately $7 million to support community-based prevention projects, aimed at reducing the incidents of violence on reserve.

The Department works with stakeholders such as the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family

Violence, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and provinces and territories, and other government departments such as the Status of Women Canada on the coordination of family violence programming to better protect the interests of First Nations women, children and families.

For further information visit INAC's website or CMHC's website *(external link, opens a new window)*

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